

Passion

Commitment to the kaupapa

If you are looking for a job in early childhood, how often do you see the word ‘passion’? Recent research suggests that many ads for e.c. teachers in this country have that descriptor (Clark, 2013). What does it mean to have passion? What is an employer looking for?

If you look into the history of the word, passion is closely aligned with the Passion of Christ: his painful and fulsome commitment to his death by crucifixion. This sets a very high bar for commitment. Presumably if an employer is looking for passion, there is a hope that this teacher will have an exceptional sense of service. Viewed skeptically, this could mean that this passionate teacher might have less desire for a robust hourly wage or salary. However, in the best sense of ‘service’, a passionate teacher can be understood as caring and open to the unexpected; to show resilience in the face of challenge and a sustained commitment to effort beyond the temporal. Maintaining a sense of advocacy, not just for ‘my e.c.e. centre’ but for the well-being of children and their families would be evidence a passionate commitment. Our correspondent in Australia, Iris Duhn, articulates how new regulations in that country are sapping e.c. teachers’ morale; new funding regimes which penalize services who take their children off the premises. What does advocating for children’s wellbeing mean in this context?

There is passion evident in the creation of the ECE Special Interest Group (SIG) which is celebrated here with four keynote addresses redeveloped into updated papers for the readers of *Early Education*. Since 2009, the ECE SIG has been holding research hui associated with the annual conference of New Zealand Association for Research in Education (NZARE). The depth of commitment to enormous kaupapa is evident here: Anne Smith’s focus on policy that reflects the rights of children, Lesley Rameka’s work to document how Maori worldviews can shape an indigenous and dynamic (even disruptive) framework for assessment of young children; Jenny Ritchie’s call for an ethic of care based on Maori principles; and Janis Carroll-Lind’s frank assessment of the challenges faced by infants in non-parental care. All these authors have worked for years to research, to analyse, to articulate, to advocate, to share.

Two peer reviewed articles show long term commitments as well. Andrew Gibbons and Sandy Farquhar’s article is grounded in a collegial conversation that has lasted seven years – and continues. In considering narratives that illustrate the becoming and the being of an early childhood teacher, it is in turn whimsical and strident. Working theories is the focus of sustained interest for Vicki Hargraves who carefully considers how teachers can work creatively in constructing for themselves how children’s working theories can be

interpreted. This requires real engagement and curiosity about children and how they think and challenges superficial photo-focused documentation masquerading as learning stories.

To be judged as having passion is different than recruiting for passion. The passing of our friend and colleague Nicky Chisnall (see Ana Pickering’s tribute) provides an opportunity to recognise the power of being grounded in humane principles which Nicky found in her sustained and diligent deep inquiry into the life and writings of Maria Montessori. We knew Nicky as a passionate bridge builder, between Montessori the woman and Montessori the movement; between Montessori method and the context of Aotearoa New Zealand; between the Montessori community and the wider early childhood sector. We will miss her calm and insightful dedication to a cause that was greater than her employment. We will miss her passion.

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Editors

Reference

Clark, B. (2012). Minding the P’s: Passion in professionalism in early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood* 13(4), 344-347. doi.org/10.2304/ciec.2012.13.4.344

The ECE SIG 2013

In 2013, the ECE SIG group is planning a day of presentations as part of the NZARE Annual Conference 26-28 November at the University of Otago, Dunedin. Using the theme ‘*Outing* creative and innovative research inside - outside early childhood education’, the day’s programme includes a Keynote presentation, followed by concurrent sessions on “Research: Methodology, design and ethical issues”; “Current Developments and the Implications for ECE Research and Practice”; and “Writing for Research Publication”.

More information about the ECE SIG from:

<http://www.nzare.org.nz/sigs/early-childhood-education-sig.html>

More information about the annual conference of NZARE:

<http://www.eenz.com/nzare13/>